



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Rabid bobcat in Lowndes County prompts reminders to immunize pets

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wild animals don't usually venture close to houses and they tend to avoid human contact. After being spotted at two nearby homes, a bobcat attacked a Lowndesboro man on Feb. 15. This highly unusual behavior led to rabies testing at the State Public Health Laboratory in Montgomery where the bobcat was found to be positive. This is the first laboratory-confirmed case of animal rabies in Lowndes County this year. The man is now undergoing rabies vaccination treatments.

Public officials encourage pet owners to be sure their dogs, cats and ferrets are vaccinated against rabies.

"We strongly caution people not to approach stray animals, wildlife and bats," said Dr. Harold Pate, Lowndes County Rabies Officer. "To protect yourself, your family and your pets from exposure to the rabies virus, you should follow these precautions."

- Avoid domestic and wild animals that are acting in a strange or unusual manner.
- Teach children to stay away from animals that are hurt or unknown to them.
- Instruct children to avoid approaching any wild animal, whether or not it is acting strangely.
- Advise children to tell an adult if they are bitten or scratched by an animal.

If you get an animal bite or scratch, wash the wound thoroughly under running water, immediately seek medical attention from your doctor or a hospital, and report the incident to the Lowndes County Health Department for follow-up. Be sure your dogs and cats have up-to-date rabies vaccinations.

Rabies is a disease of all mammals, including man, and is always considered to be fatal unless preventative treatment is given following the bite. The primary means of exposure is through a bite or scratch with contaminated saliva from the animal. Transmission of the deadly virus also can occur if saliva contacts mucous membranes of the eye or mouth.

Vaccination of domestic dogs, cats and ferrets not only protects the animals against rabies, but also creates a protective buffer between wildlife rabies and humans. State law requires that dogs, cats and ferrets remain currently vaccinated against rabies.

For additional information please contact Harold Pate, D.V.M., at (334) 548-2031 or Burton Fisher, Lowndes County Health Department, at (334) 548-2564.

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